

"IF I WERE SANTA"

by Bert Nelson

If I were Santa Claus, I would...give my gifts to the world of track and field...have track be treated as the major sport it is... all daily newspapers would give track as much space as baseball and horse racing...television would show as much track as wrestling and boxing...all colleges would compete in the NCAA...all qualified men would compete in the AAU, making it truly a national championships... there would be a true world's championship every year...good men would be encouraged to remain in competition until they achieved their potential...the Bob Mathias-Charley Moore-Walt Davis type would be able to continue their record breaking, past the ripe old age of 22 or 23... there would be many more open meets for non-collegians, and they would run through the summer and into the fall...all major meets would be held in good weather, and U.S. distance men would feel like running... top foreign stars would compete in the U.S. as often as Americans compete abroad...each year the U.S. would have a chance to see all the best in action...all Track Nuts would be able to see all the meets they desire...greats of the past would come out of retirement, still in their prime, and undergo training under modern techniques. Then they would compete with each other to settle, for the year, the question of who was the greatest of all time?...the U.S. collegiate program would become realistic...the 400m hurdles would replace the 220 hurdles, 5000m would replace the two-mile, a steeplechase and 10,000m would be added, as well as the hammer-throw and hop-step-jump... the world would get together on yards and meters...since the British-U.S. measuring system is cockeyed to begin with all of us would be granted the ability to fully understand metric measurements...starting and timing would be consistently good, especially in the sprints... athletic directors and track coaches would become promotion minded... trackmen in the service would be able to continue hard training and competition, so Bob McMillen, Jim Golliday, George Brown and others would still be right at the top..."Track & Field News" would be an unlimited success, so that it could be published daily, in whatever size was desirable, and delivered to everyone, everywhere on the day of publication...all Track Nuts would be able to enjoy a good session, with whomever they pleased, whenever they felt like it...a slow motion film would be taken of every important race, so that the event could be run and re-run at hearts content...schedules would be relaxed enough so that it would be possible to see everything of interest that happens at a meet...college coaches would be provided with an incentive to keep up, without the harmful pressure of overemphasis, a la football.. cross country would become a universal sport...every high school and every college would compete...the NCAA would have entries from all schools of any ability...there would be a truly international cross country championships...one of the statisticians would devise a fool-proof, universally accepted method of correlating cross country times made on various courses, so that there would be accepted cross country records....another statistician would put an end to the foolishness of constantly revising the decathlon tables...there would be more decathlon meets...place times would be taken officially at every meet... infields would be kept absolutely clear of extra officials, athletes and hangers ons, a la the Helsinki Olympics...the U.S., so proud of its ability to organize and promote, would be able to run meets as well as Tiny Finland ran the Olympics...people would forget the foolishness of "will Russia beat the U.S. in the next Olympics?" and remember that track and field is an individual sport, and who cares.

about unofficial, irrelevant competition between nations?...that if the Russians insisted on making a contest of it they challenge us to a meet on neutral grounds at any given time in the future...the winner would also be declared the victor in the Cold War, and Russia, the sure-fire loser, would peacefully give up its attempt at world domination as its price for defeat...Southern California would continue to be as strong as at present, but other schools would rise to the challenge and break the monopoly...other states would give California a run for the money in high school track...an all U.S. prep meet would decide the issue each year...a nationwide indoor track circuit would be established, with at least one big meet a year in each major center of population...a new type wind gauge would be used at all meets. It would scientifically determine the amount of aid given each runner and would interpolate the times accordingly...the gaps in track and field history would be filled in...someone would tell us how much advantage, if any, there is in the new type vaulting poles as compared with the bamboo pole of the incomparable Warmerdam, and how high Dutch would have gone with a new pole...the same genius would tell us whether indoor or outdoor times are faster, and by how much...all indoor tracks would be uniform, in size, banking, and construction...sprinters would be happy to see who could run the fastest, not who is the best start stealer...starters would be authorized to pass up the recall gun in favor of a shot of buckshot into the sprinter who consistently tries to beat the gun...fans would be authorized to shoot the starter who uses a fast gun or allows a race to be stolen...an electronic measurement would be made of the best sprinters at full speed, thus determining the maximum velocity of the "world's fastest human", as distinct from the man who can run the fastest 100...the world would adopt common standards on the use of turns vs. straightaways...every touring U.S. track team would have, in addition to a coach and manager, a publicity man conversant with performances and statistics and the publicity man would be chosen from the ranks of qualified track nuts... I would, in short, take care of all the points missed above by granting the every wish of every Track Nut...the question is, what would you TNS wish for?

Since I am not Santa, and in lieu of the above, I and brother Cordner wish you all a Merry Christmas, and a Happy, track-filled, New Year. And we send our thanks for your friendship and continued support of and interest in our humble efforts to fill the gap.

NOTED WITH INTEREST

ATHLETICS WORLD reports...Russia has a shot put prospect named Ganiss who is 17, weighs 341 pounds and is 7 ft. 5 3/8 in. tall... Galina Zybina, Russia's female weight star, has put the 16 pound shot 41- 1/8...Russia has adopted a new approach to track, having denied Vladimir Okorokov the USSR championship even though he won the race in 3:54.6. An official announcement said: "instead of running to the best of his possibilities, he let others set the pace and just forged ahead in the last few yards to win a cheap victory"...Benke Nilsson jumped in 47 meets, averaged 6-7 1/4 for his winning leaps. Ernie Shelton averaged 6-8 3/4 in 34 meets...on October 16, after no competition for six weeks, Shelton took a workout. He set the bar at 6-8, cleared it 10 times before missing, then twice cleared 6-10 1/4... In running 13:51.6, Chris Chataway covered the last three miles in 13:25.0 as compared with Kuts' world record of 13:26.4...Lajos Szentgali was unbeaten last season, except for a heat. He tried 400m late in the season and did only 49.0. His all time best is only 48.2... Russia has great depth in the hop-step-jump, with nine men over 15m, 49-2 1/2, and the tally incomplete...European champion vaulter Eeles Landstrom and Milan Milakov of Yugoslavia are to compete in the U.S. colleges next year...in 24 appearances, Adolfo Consolini averaged

174-6½, and at the age of 37...Giuseppe Tosi, now retired, has a "successor", Zdenek Cihak, a 6-4 3/4, 233 pound, 21-year-old Czech, who improved from 105-7 in 1950 through 120-10 3/4, 130-9 5/8, 146-11 3/8 to 174-10 3/8 this year...Soini Nikkinen now has now had nine winning throws over 250, bettering Matti Jarvinen's mark of eight. Eight of the tosses came in 1954, and the first, his 256-9 1/8 heave, in 1953. Soini's further claim to consistent greatness is his great series of Oct. 2 when he averaged 252-4, with his first five marks over 250...lap times for Kuts when he lost to Chataway were: 62.8, 67.0, 65.8, 68.8 (4:24.4), 69.0, 62.4, 69.0, 70.0 (8:54.8), 69.6, 69.4, 69.0, 64.2 (13:27.), with 24.8 for the tag end...time comparisons for world record 5000m runs show:

Runner	Time	1000m	2000m	3000m	4000m	3 miles	last KM
Hagg	13:58.2	2:40.0	5:27.0	8:18.5	11:09.0	13:32.4(25.8)	2:49.2
Zatopek	13:57.2	2:47.2	5:34.4	8:23.4	11:13.4	?	2:43.8
Kuts	13:56.6	2:44.0	5:36.7	8:23.9	11:12.2	13:27.8(28.8)	2:44.4
Chataway	13:51.6	2:41.6	5:31.7	8:16.8	11:10.0	13:27.1(24.5)	2:41.6
Kuts	13:51.2	2:38.5	5:30.6	8:25.6	11:07.5	13:26.4(24.8)	2:43.7
Even pace for 13:51.2		2:46.2	5:32.5	8:18.7	11:04.9	13:22.6(28.6)	2:46.2

WORLD ATHLETIC SERVICE, a German agency, lists the decathlon points for the top performers of 1954: Krivonosov 1544; O'Brien 1516; Miller 1490; Gordien 1427; Strandli 1418; Landy 1412; Bannister 1382; Lampert 1379; Zatopek 10,000m 1371; Nikkinen 1368; Csermak 1356; Landy 1500m 1342; Nilsson and Shelton 1340; da Silva 1335; Sidlo 1333; Hyytiäinen 1330; Santee mile 1324; Iharos 1500 1321; Santee 1500m 1307. Kuts' 13:51.2 scores only 1290 for 27th place.

ATHLETICS WEEKLY publishes its training questionnaire on Gordon Pirie. He's 6-2, 144 pounds, a salesman, started track in 1941 at cross country, is 23, says his favorite events are cross country, 880, mile, 2m, 3m, 6m. He got the most personal satisfaction from his three mile win against Moscow in 13:53 "since all critics had written me off as 'burned out'. This also being done on 3 weeks' fast training was very satisfactory". He trains "seven days a week--there are no more--summer and winter, whenever convenient during the day, and from 2 to 3½ and sometimes 4 hours". A typical training routine, summer or winter is: 1 hour warm-up, reps of fast running over distances--200, 300, 400, 600, 800, 1000, 1200, 1600, 2000m. For 200m maximum number of repetitions is 25 times from 27 to 30 seconds; 2000m maximum number of reps is 6 from 5:40 to 7 mins. The number of reps and times depend upon: condition, time of season, races. These fast runs are followed by 10-30 minutes of jogging. "The important thing to consider is that the body should have recovered in 24 hours to do the next session of training. Many individuals can carry out one day of this training but they cannot carry on day after day with this amount of work. These runners also lack the quality of being able to produce top class performances day after day. This is a must for athletics today if one is to win major championships over 5000 and 10,000m. The runner who can produce only one record in one month will not succeed in the mounting standards of today." Depending upon the time of year his number of competitions vary. "Basically, the more competitions run the easier athletics becomes, the faster the athlete runs and the more strength is lost. Therefore one must choose some time of the year to build strength and another to produce speed. Thus the winter is the time for fewer competitions (1 every 3 weeks or so) to allow the bulk of training to be carried out and strength to be developed. In the Summer the races can be every other day at the height of the season--giving the speed required for top performance." Warm-up: "1 hour

before any competition. The body does not change according to the distance to be raced. It needs the same amount of warming up before an 880 as before 10 miles. The warm-up consists of jogging in complete track suit for one hour before the race, and starting the race without a rest. No fast running or sprints necessary." Pirie advises the young athlete: "Enjoy your running. Go to win. Be uninhibited. Be ready to accept criticism--it will help you in the long run. Be ready to make sacrifices to win. Your athletics can be an education--not as some critics suggest--a method of producing a super hermit."

SO THEY TELL US

TN BRUCE WEBB, Pasadena: "Sherman Miller, who ran 47.7 in high school has not come close to his potential yet. When he gets back to Oxy next fall I think you will find a changed boy in Sherm. Speaking of potential, he ran two races in practice during the 1950 high school season that were simply fabulous. During the middle of the season he ran 352 yards in 35.4. One week after the state meet he told me he felt like running 47.0. Two watches caught him in 46.8 and 46.9. He had bad luck every year and in 1953 would have been in the low 46s if he hadn't flunked out for he had run 21.2 and 48.2 in January.... Little Max Truex will become America's greatest distance runner ever. You won't have to worry about him switching to the mile and 880 as Santee did, for he is too short and stocky and lacks the speed needed for a great effort, but watch out for him from two miles on up."

TN HARRY DAWSON, Oakland, Cal.: "U.S. neglects certain Olympic events. Hammer; On 8/17/13 P.J. Ryan threw 189-6 $\frac{1}{2}$. 40 years later, 7/11/53, Martin Engel threw 195-4 $\frac{1}{2}$, still an American record, altho beaten many hundreds of times by Europeans. Fred Tootel, ex Bowdoin, after becoming track coach, threw 210 plus, showing what could be done. The Atlantic Seaboard bears the entire burden for the U.S. in producing an Olympic hammer team. Hop-step-jump: On 5/20/11 Dan Ahern jumped 50/11. On 6/29/41 Billy Brown, LSU, jumped 50-11 $\frac{1}{2}$. In 43 years this event has improved $\frac{1}{2}$ ", altho I think Jesse Owens could have beaten 54' if he had carried out his published desire to create a new world mark. The entire U.S. burden is carried by some high schools in the south. The effort of some sprinters and broad jumpers to quickly become triple jumpers has only produced poor Olympic performances. 400m hurdles: Our idea of taking good quarter-milers and converting them into 400m hurdlers in a few weeks will no longer be good enough. The record will likely be around 49.5 by Melbourne time. Why is not this event encouraged by all schools every year? Javelin: To not have the javelin in some of our big conferences is silly. I do not know if true, but I have heard that the reason was an incident in the 1940 ICA meet when a javelin missed an official by a few feet. Why don't the official police the throwing area, as they do in the rest of the world? Discus: Why is the discus barred from the stadium in some U.S. championship and other important meets? Is the shunting of the event to some vacant lot supposed to inspire the athlete and encourage the fan to attend meets? Finally, if an event is good enough for the Olympics, it should be good enough for a similar U.S. event."

WINDSPRINTS

In an AAU development meet at New York, Dec. 10, on a flat 220 track, Carl Cager won 100 in 10.3, Remigino failing to reach finals; Gordon McKenzie ran two miles in 9:20.2, Tom Courtney won 600 from scratch in 1:12.7; Stanfield did not qualify in the 300...it is spelled variously throughout the world, but Russia spells it "Kuts" too....Jesse Owens says if it hadn't been for the National Interscholastic Meet where he ran 9.4 and 20.7 he probably wouldn't have gone to college... Britain produced an 18-year-old, Roger Dunkley, who ran 4:12.8 this yr.